

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Forests & Forest Health

Statement

The Testimony of

Paula R. Littles

On Behalf of the Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee

Before the U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health

Thursday, June 22, 2000

1334 Longworth House Office Building

Good Morning.

My name is Paula Littles and I am the Legislative Director for PACE International Union (Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical, and Energy Workers). I am here today representing the Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee (LMC), of which PACE International Union is a member. The LMC is a non-profit trust operating within the confines of the Taft-Hartley Act and is comprised of a coalition of employer and employee representatives from the forest products community.

The LMC was formed ten years ago out of a common goal between labor and management to achieve public policy decisions that balance environmental, economic and social concerns. Collectively, the LMC unions represent more than 250,000 forest products workers across the nation, including pulp and paper employees, lumber and sawmill workers, carpenters, machinists, transportation workers and Forest Service employees.

I am here today to discuss the labor community's concerns for the various rulemakings proposed by the Clinton Administration including:

The national proposals:

· **The Roadless Area Policy**: A comprehensive review of 50 million acres of national forest roadless areas,

one of the most important rulemaking activities undertaken by the Forest Service in forty years.

- **The Proposed Rules on Road Management:** The Forest Service's new transportation policy that aims to address the \$8 billion backlog in transportation system maintenance needs. Many of our members will actually be employed in addressing the maintenance backlog, building roads.
- **The Land Management Planning Rule Revision:** The Forest Service's proposed planning regulations are inconsistent with the Agency's congressionally-mandated mission of managing the land for multiple use, sustained yield.
- **The Draft Strategic Plan:** The plan attempts to change the mission of the Forest Service, in direct conflict with its multiple use mandate. Also, the draft plan fails to consider the economic and social impacts to stakeholders.

And the regional proposals:

- **The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP):** A project which governs an area one-fifth of the size of the continental United States, and is an effort in which our members have been involved in for over six years.
- **Sierra Nevada Framework:** The Framework seeks to amend several plans that manage the national forests throughout California and Nevada, also includes the Plumas, Lassen and Tahoe national forests. We are concerned that the Framework inadequately addresses the economic crisis in California's rural forest communities and lacks an appropriate plan to reduce fuel loads and protect the forests and surrounding communities from catastrophic wildfire.
- **Quincy Library Group:** Since its inception, the LMC has been actively engaged in the QLQ project. One of our own union members played an integral part in the negotiation process that led to the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forestry Recovery Act. Truly a community-based effort that successfully addressed the needs of neighboring forests, the bill unanimously passed Congress and was signed by the President. But today, the Agency has failed to properly implement the plan as written by law.
- **The Proposed Survey and Manage Policy for the Northwest Forest Plan:** As participants in President Clinton's Northwest Timber Summit in 1992, our Coalition worked closely with the Administration. Unfortunately, the plan has not been adequately implemented, failing to meet required harvest levels. Recently the survey and manage provision has created another impasse between regulators and the forest products industry, halting timber sales in the region and violates the original compromise.

Taken one at a time, the potential impacts from each of these rulemakings will spell economic disaster for forest products workers and even more alarming are the cumulative impacts. Our union, along with our brothers and sisters in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers have been actively engaged in the debate over the future of national land management policies. We have examined each of the proposed rulemakings and have attempted to respond to each accordingly. Our ultimate concern lies in the fact that as the rules were crafted, the livelihoods of thousands of American workers were ignored.

Collectively, these rulemakings will restrict access to our national forests and limit the amount of fiber supplied to our mills. As far as we are concerned, no consideration was given to the immediate negative

impact these rules will have on working families and the industry in our ability to sustain competitive viability. The potential threat to the economic stability of our workers and the forest products community cannot be ignored.

While the Forest Service has been rapidly moving these rulemakings through the process, our union members have been working to become diligent participants in the policy making process. We have written letters to the Administration, made phone calls, met with government officials, and currently our rank and file members are attending field hearings across the nation on the roadless policy.

Yet union members--a number of which are active supporters of the Clinton Administration--feel that their ability to remain actively engaged is being compromised by the sheer depth and breadth of the proposed regulations that will directly impact their paychecks.

On behalf of the labor unions in the forest products sector, I am here before you today to find answers to a number of our questions. What is the economic impact for each of these proposed rulemakings? How are they interrelated? And what is the cumulative impact on working families and communities in each national forest region? Our workers deserve answers and at the same time are simply asking for a good government process to ensure public policy decisions that will successfully manage the future of our forestlands.

We all are striving towards the same goals--providing healthy forests and a safe environment for future generations. The land must be properly managed, and decisions made as a result of a good government process, not a process that disregards the people and the land that it will impact the most.

These proposed rulemakings are far-reaching proposals and livelihoods of thousands of workers and the economic stability of hundreds of rural communities are at risk. Our unions believe it is a dangerous approach to regulate the national forests by steamrolling the local constituents. We feel that there is no reason to rush these complex rulemakings forward without adequate analysis of their individual and cumulative impacts to working families and rural economies.

I urge our leaders in Congress to help us find answers to the individual and cumulative impacts of these proposed rulemakings. The working men and women of this country deserve nothing less.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee and Chairwoman Chenoweth-Hage for inviting me here today as we work towards common sense solutions to the future of land management policy.

#